

2012: Season of Discovery

Even without carpets of wildflowers along the road sides, blossoms can be found if you are willing to leave your car to walk, especially in western canyons and washes.

Wildflower Update for April 18th

Rain late in March prompted most ocotillos to leaf out, making them the stars of this season's wildflower show. Many cactus species have also responded, with new growth and an abundance of blossoms. And don't underestimate the beauty of desert trees in bloom!

- Visitor Center area: the desert willow and palo verde trees are blooming, along with the sweet-smelling indigo bush (named for its deep purple flowers). We have several varieties of cactus in bloom, including prickly pear, barrel, hedgehog and three species of cholla. A few desert dandelions and some wire lettuce (*Stephanomeria*) have popped up here and there, and tiny cryptantha persists as the most abundant (albeit inconspicuous) annual.
- Borrego Palm Canyon: Enjoy the bright yellow blossoms of the palo verde trees in the campground. You may still be able to find shrubs and a few annuals blooming. Carrying plenty of water is a must as the weather heats up. Bighorn sheep need water too, of course, and have been seen at the stream recently.
- Blair Valley: look for goldfields blooming on the lake bed.
- Higher Elevations: many flowers can be seen along the stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) between Barrel Springs and Warner Springs. Pick up the trail near the PCT marker near milepost 1.0 on highway S-22, east of Ranchita. Drivers of four-wheel-drive vehicles can see plenty of goldfields along the Jasper Trail and Grapevine Canyon roads, and ceanothus, bush poppy, and Indian paintbrush along Rodriguez and Chariot Canyons.